



GAISFORD PRIZE

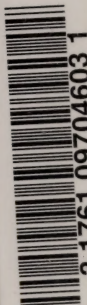
Greek Elegiac Verse

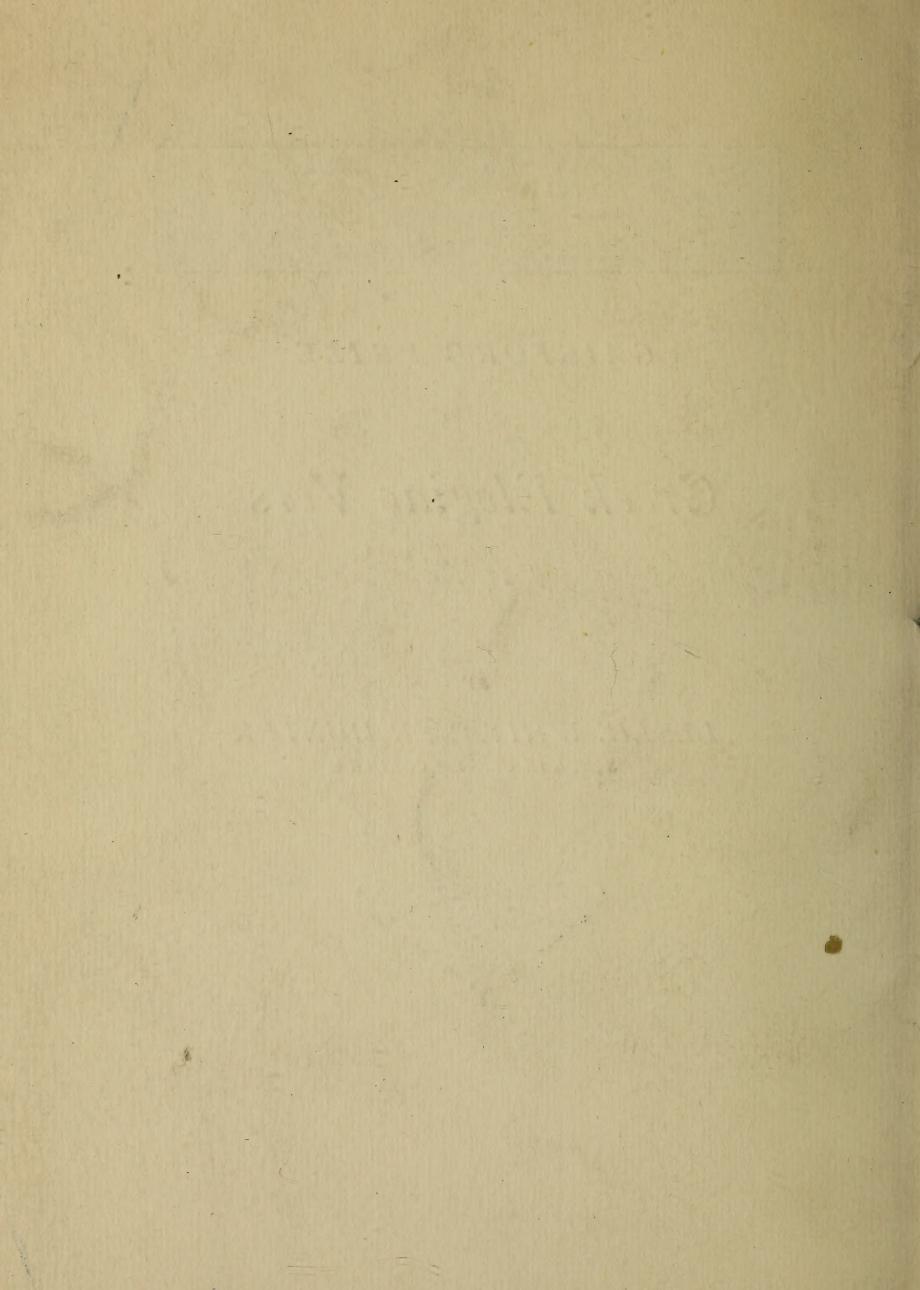
1906

BY

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Pamph
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Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson

CHORIC SONG

FROM

TENNYSON'S 'LOTOS-EATERS'

TRANSLATED INTO GREEK ELEGIAC VERSE

BY

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‘λωτὸν ἔρεπτόμενοι μενέμεν νόστου τε λαθέσθαι.’

Od. ix. 97.

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful
skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep, 10
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness ?
All things have rest : why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings, 20
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
' There is no joy but calm !'
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things ?

I.

Ἦδὺ μέλος· κέχυται θ' ἀπαλώτερον ἢ ρόδου ἄνθος
 ἀκμαῖον χαμάδις κοῦφα χέει πέταλα,
 ἢ δρόσος ἐννυχία περιχεύεται, ἔνθα πέτραισιν
 ὕδατα μαρμαίρει νήνεμ' ὑπὸ σκιεραῖς·
 ἡδύτερον δὲ φρένας τόδ' ὑπήλυθεν ἡέ ποθ' ὕπνος
 ἦλθεν ὑπὸ βλεφάροις ὄμματ' ἐς αὐαλέα.
 τοῖον γὰρ μέλος ἐστὶν ἀπ' αἰθέρος οἶον ἐφ' ἡμᾶς
 ἐκ μακάρων τε θεῶν νήδυμον ὕπνον ἄγει.
 τὸ μνίον ἔστρωται χαμάδις, βαθὺ δέμνιον ὑγρόν,
 εὐπέταλός θ' ἔρπει κισσὸς ἐνερθε βρύων·
 βριθομένη δ' ὕπνω νέυει μήκων ἀπὸ κρημνοῦ,
 ἄνθεα δ' ἐν πηγαῖς φύλλα βρέχει ραδινά.

10

II.

τίποθ' ἡμῖν βαρύποτμον ἄχος κέαρ ἐνδοθι δάκνει
 πικροτάτοις ἄρδην πῆμασι τρυχόμενον;
 τᾶλλα μὲν ἡσυχίῃ τέρπει μόχθων τ' ἀνάπαντα,
 χρὴ δὲ μόνους ἡμᾶς τηκομένους καμάτοις
 ἀλληκτον στενάχειν, πάντων περ ἔοντας ἀρίστους,
 ἀτηροῖς ὀδυνῶν κύμασι σειομένους.
 ὥς δ' ὅτε σεύεται ὄρνις ἐπ' εὐρέα νῶτα θαλάσσης
 χερσαῖος, πτύξαι δ' οὐποτ' ἔχει πτέρυγας,
 ὦδ' ἡμεῖς φερόμεσθα πλανώμενοι· οὐδέ ποθ' ὕπνος
 ἀμβρόσιον πάσσει κῶμα κατὰ βλεφάρων.
 Ζεὺς δ' ἄρ' ἔθηκε κλέος θριγκόν τ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι μέγιστον
 ἀνθρώπους; τί μόνους ἤλιθα χρὴ πονέειν;

20

III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
 With winds upon the branch, and there
 Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
 Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
 Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow
 Falls, and floats adown the air. 30
 Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
 Drops in a silent autumn night.
 All its allotted length of days,
 The flower ripens in its place,
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. 40
 Death is the end of life ; ah ! why
 Should life all labour be ?
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will last ?

III.

πυκνόταται τείνουσιν ἵνα δρύες εὔσκιον ὕλην
 φρίσσουσιν μαλακοῖς κλῶνας ὑπὸ ζεφύροις,
 ἦρι νέον βλαστοῦσα χλόη παρέκυσεν ἐλικτὴ
 ἐκ κάλυκος· θασσον δ' εἰαρινοῖς θαλέθει
 πνεύμασιν αὐξομένη φύλλον πλατὺ τ' ἀμπετάσασα·
 οὐδέ τις ἀλγεινὴ φροντὶς ὑπῆλθε βίου. 30
 τὴν δ' αὐγαί τε τρέφουσι μεσημβριναὶ Ἡελίοιο
 νύξ τε σεληναίαις ἡρέμ' ἔτεγξε δρόσοις·
 ὀψὲ δ' ἄρ' ἐν θερέει χαμάδις πέσεν, ὥχρὰ ιδέσθαι,
 τὴν δὲ φέρει κοῦφον πνεῦμα τινασσομένην.
 καῦμά τ', ἰδοῦ, θερινὸν μελιηδέα καρπὸν ἀδρύνει,
 δένδρε' ὅτ' ἐν κήποις ἄσπετα μῆλα τρέφει·
 ἀκμάζει δὲ βρύων· ὥρα δ' ὅτ' ἐπῆλθεν ὀπώρης,
 κάππεσεν, ὀρφναίης νυκτὸς ἐν ἡσυχίῃ.
 ἀνθεσι δὴ βραχὺς ἐστι βίος· τὰ δ' ἔκηλα κατ' ἡμαρ
 ἀκμάζει, στερεοὺς δ' οὐ τι σύννοιδε πόνους· 40
 καρποφόρῳ δ' αἰεὶ ρίζαν κεύθουσ' ἐνὶ κόλπῳ
 Γαῖα τρέφει θάλλοντ' ἢ μαραινόμενα.

IV.

ἐχθρὸν κυανέου δέπας αἰθέρος, ἐχθρὸν ιδέσθαι,
 ἐχθρὰ δὲ κυάνεος πόντος ἐνερθε βρέμει.
 ἦξει δὴ ταχὺ μοῖρα τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο·
 φεῦ· τί βροτῶν γενεῇ μῶνος ἔφν κάματος;
 δηρόν, ἐᾶθ', εὐδωμεν· ἐπείγεται ἄρμα χρόνιο
 ὠκύδρομον· ταχὺ δὴ φθόγγον ἀπὸ στομάτων
 νυκτὸς ὁδοὶ κατέχουσιν ἀφεγγέες. ἀλλ' εὐδωμεν·
 μή τι μένει θνητοῖς ἀφθιτον ἡμερίοις; 50

All things are taken from us, and become
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
 To war with evil? Is there any peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave? 50

All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
 In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful
 ease!

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem
 Falling asleep in a half-dream!
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
 Eating the Lotos day by day, 60
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray:
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
 To muse and brood and live again in memory,
 With those old faces of our infancy
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

φρουῖδα τὰ πρόσθε· χρόνος γὰρ αἰήρυτος, ὥς ποταμός τις,
 πάντα φέρει παριῶν ἄπλετον εἰς πέλαγος.
 ἀλλ' εὐδωμεν· ἑᾶτε· τί γὰρ καὶ χάρμα γένοιτ' ἂν
 ἐκτρίβειν βίοτον πρὸς κακὰ μαρναμένοις;
 τίς δε κυλινδομένοισιν ἐπ' οἷδατα κυμαίνοντα
 ἡσυχίῃ; τὰ δὲ πάντ' ἔλλαχεν ἡσυχίης·
 σιγᾷ μὲν θάλλοντα νέον, σιγᾷ δὲ πεσόντα·
 σιγῇ δ' ᾧδ' Ἀΐδης ἥρπασεν οἰχόμενα.
 θεοί, μακρὰν δότ' ἄρ' ἡσυχίην, εὖκηλον ἰαύειν,
 ἣ σκοτόεντ' Ἀΐδην νύκτα τ' ὀφειλομένην.

60

V.

ἡδὺ τόδ' ἡδὺ μύσαντι κατειβομένην ἀπὸ πέτρας
 κρήνην, ἡδὺ δ' αἰὲ τὸ ψιθύρισμα κλύειν·
 ἡδὺ τε γυῖα λύειν ὕπνω δεδμημέν' ἀύπνω,
 πάνθ' ὅτ' ἀμαύρ' ἡμῖν φαίνεται ὥς κατ' ὄναρ.
 δεῖελον ὥς τε φάος τόδε φαίνεται Ἡελίοιο
 ἡσυχᾷ τῇδ' εὐδειν ἄκρη ἐν ὑλοκόμῳ,
 ᾧδ' αὐτός γ' εὐδοίμι πανήμερος, ἡδ' ἐπὶ θῖνι
 κοιμηθεὶς ψίθυρον φθέγμα κλύοιμ' ἐτάρων.
 ἡδὺ τ' αἰὲ λωτοῖο φαγεῖν μελιηδέα καρπόν,
 κύματά θ' ᾧδ' ἰδέειν μικρὰ κορυσσομένην
 κυρτὸν ἐπαφρίζοντα παρὰ ῥηγμῖνι θαλάσσης,
 λευκοφαῇ δ' ὑγροῖς ἀφρὸν ἐπ' αἰγιαλοῖς.
 ᾧδέ γ' αἰὲ ψυχὴν κηλήμασιν ἡπιόθυμοις
 θέλγοιμ' εὐκήλῳ φροντίδι πειθομένην,
 πολλὰ παλαιγενέων μεμνημένος ὄμματα φωτῶν
 οἷ μ' ἔτι νήπιον ὄνθ' ἐνδυκέως ἔτρεφον.
 τοὺς δ' ἄρα χῶμα νέον κρύπτει χθονός· ἐν δὲ κονίην
 λευκὴν, δισσὰ χερῶν δράγματα, τεύχος ἔχει.

70

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
 And dear the last embraces of our wives 70
 And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change;
 For surely now our household hearths are cold:
 Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes over-bold
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
 Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
 And our great deeds; as half-forgotten things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle?
 Let what is broken so remain. 80
 The Gods are hard to reconcile:
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.
 There *is* confusion worse than death,
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
 Long labour unto aged breath,
 Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
 With half-dropt eyelids still, 90
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,

VI.

ἦν ἡμῖν φίλα λέκτρα, φίλων τ' ἀσπάσματα χειρῶν
 ὕστατα, κουριδίης δάκρυα θερμ' ἀλόχου, 80
 φροῦδα δὲ νῦν τὰ παλαί· οὐδεὶς τ' ἔτ' ἐφέστιος οἴκῳ
 νόστον προσδέχεται δηρὸν ἀποιχομένων.
 ἦ φίλος ἡμετέροις ἐνὶ δώμασιν νῆς ἀνάσσει,
 οὐδέ τις ἂν γνοίῃ πατριον ὅμμ' ἐσιδών,
 φάσματα δ' ὥς νεκύων ἐρχοίμεθα, δαιτὸς ἀνίη·
 ἦε τάχ' ἐκ νήσων ἄνδρες ὑπερφίαλοι
 κτήματα δαρδάπτουσιν ἀναιδέες, ἐν δ' ἄρ' αἰοιδὸς
 τὸν δεκατῇ Τροίας οὐλόμενον πόλεμον
 ἔργα δ' ὅσ' ἐν πολέμῳ τολυπεύσαμεν νῆες Ἀχαιῶν
 μέλπεται ὥς μύθου μνημα τρέφων ἀσαφές. 90
 ἄρ' Ἰθάκην ἄπλητος ἔρις θόρυβός τε ταράσσει;
 ἡμῖν γ' οὐ τι μέλει· δεῖ τάδ' ἄκοσμα μένειν.
 ἦ χαλεπὸν γε θεῶν κάμψαι νόον, ὅστις ἐπέλθῃ
 ἀχθόμενος, τά τε πάντ' ὀρθὰ πάλιν τιθέναι.
 κρεῖσσον γὰρ θανάτοιο τυχεῖν ἢ ζῶντα συνοικεῖν
 πῆμασι πῆματ' αἰεὶ μείζον' ἐφελκομένοις.
 οὐ σθένος ἔσθ', ἡμῖν δ' ἀμβλύνεται ὄμματος αὐγὴ
 Ἄρκτον Πληιάδας τ' εἰσοροῶσι πάλαι,
 σήματα ναυσιπόροις· μόχθος δ' ἐπὶ θυμὸν ἔτριβεν
 ἀλλήκτοιο μάχης· οὐ σθένεμεν πονέειν. 100

VII.

θάλλει μῶλν τόδ' ἀμβρόσιον, θάλλει τ' ἀμάραντος,
 κοιμᾷ θ' ὑπνοδότης ἦκα πνέων ζέφυρος·
 ἡδύ τέ μοι βλεφάροισιν ὑπόσκιον ὄμμα καλύψαι
 θελγομένοις, μαλακῇ φυλλάδι κεκλιμένῳ·

To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
 His waters from the purple hill—
 To hear the dewy echoes calling
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
 To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
 Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak : 100
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek :
 All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
 Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-
 dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge
 was seething free,

Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-
 fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
 On the hills like Gods together, careless of man-
 kind. 110

For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
 Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are
 lightly curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming
 world :

ὄφρα δὲ κυάνεον κνέφας αἰθέρα διὸν ἐφέρει
 ἡδὺ βραδὺν λεύσσειν χρυσοφαῇ ποταμόν,
 ὃν τέκε καλλίροον τηλέσκοπα πορφυροειδῆ
 οὔρεα· τὴν δ' Ἥχῳ πολλάκις ἡδὺ κλύειν
 ἄντρα κατὰ δροσόεντα λιγύστομον, ἣν τε πυκάζει
 ἄμπελος ὑγρὰ πέριξ κλήματα χευαμένη,
 ἡδ' ἵνα θεσπεσίῳις θαλέθουσ' ἐλίκεσσιν ἄκανθοι
 γλαυκά τ' ἀπὸ σπιλάδων νάμαθ' ἐκὰς χέεται.
 καὶ τόδ' ἄλῃς, λεύσσειν ἄλα τηλόθι μαρμαίρουσαν
 ἡὲ κλύειν, πεύκη τῇδ' ὑποκεκλιμένοις.

110

VIII.

θάλλει λώτινον ἄνθος ὑπ' οὔρεσιν ἡλιβάτοισι,
 πὰρ δ' ἀνθεῖ μυχίαις ἡϊόνεσσιν ἁλός.
 παννῆμαρ μαλακοὶ δ' ὑποσυνρίζοντες ἀῆται
 ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖς ἡδ' ἀβάτοισι νάπαις
 λωτοῦ πολλὰ φέρουσ' εὐωδέος ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
 ξανθὴν ἀβληχρᾶ σὺν στροφάλιγγι κόνιν.
 νῦν δ' ἡμῖν ἄλῃς ἐστὶ σαλευομένοις ἐνὶ πόντῳ
 πολλά τε χειμερίοις κύμασι σειομένοις,
 εἰνάλιον μέγα κῆτος ὅτ' ἐν βένθεσσι κυλισθὲν
 ἐκφυσᾷ ζαλόεντ' ἀφρὸν ἀπὸ στομάτων.
 ἀλλ' ἄγε δὴ μέγαν ὄρκον ὁμούμεθα, τῇδ' ἐνὶ κοίλῃ
 γαίῃ Λωτοφάγων λοιπὸν ἄγειν βίον
 ὄχθαις κεκλιμένοι, θνητῶν δ' ἅμ' ἀκηδέες ἀνδρῶν
 ὡς θεοί, οὐρανίας οἳ τε νέμοντες ἔδρας
 νέκταρ ἀεὶ πίνουσιν ἀκηδέες· ἐν δὲ νάπαισι
 σκήπτει ρηιδίως πυρφόρ' ἐνερθε βέλη·
 ὕψι δ' ἐλισσόμεναι νεφέλαι περὶ δώματ' ἔχουσι
 χρυσόροφα· ζῶνῃ τ' εἵκελα δαιδαλέῃ

120

130

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted
 lands,
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring
 deeps and fiery sands,
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,
 and praying hands.
 But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful
 song
 Streaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of
 wrong
 Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are
 strong;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the
 soil, 120
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and
 oil;
 Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd—
 down in hell
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the
 shore
 Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave
 and oar;
 Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander
 more.

κόσμος ἀπειρέσιος περιβάλλεται· οἱ δὲ λαθόντες
 ἄλγεα τερπόμενοι προσγελώσι βροτῶν,
 γῆν δορὶ τεμνομένην λοιμόν τ' ὀλεσίπτολιν ἀνδρῶν
 λιμούς τ' αὐαλέους σειόμενόν τε πέδον,
 καὶ ψάμμον πυρίφλεκτον ἀμαιμακέτην τε θαλάσσης
 ὀργήν, ἣδ' ἀνδρῶν μαρναμένων κόναβον,
 περθομένας τε πόλεις πυρὶ νηλεΐ, καὶ κατὰ πόντον
 νῆας δυομένας, χειροτόνους τε λιτὰς 140
 ὀλλυμένων· τοιαῦτα θεοὶ γελώσιν ἰδόντες
 σχέτλιοι· ἡμετέρους δ' ἡδὺ γόους αἶειν
 οὐς χέομεν ταχύμοιροι· αἰεὶ δ' εἰς οὐρανὸν ἵκει
 φθόγγος οὔζυρον πότμον ὀδυρομένων.
 πολλὰ δ' ἐπεύχονται μεγάλῳ ρόθῳ, οὔτι λέγοντες,
 δεινὰ δ' αἰεὶ πάσχουσ' ἄνδρες ἀροτροπόνοι
 τλήμονες, οἳ σπείρουσι γύας ἀμώσσι τ' ἀρούρας
 καρπὸν, ἕως ἐτέων ἀψ περιτελλομένων
 οἶνόν τ' εὖ πυρόν τε μόλις καταθέντες ἐν οἴκοις
 μέτριον, οἷχονται νύκτ' ἐς ὀφειλομένην. 150
 καὶ τοὺς μὲν φθιμένους περ, αἰεὶ λόγος ἄλγεα πάσχειν
 δεινότερ' αἰδίοις εἶν' Ἀἴδαο δόμοις·
 τοὺς δ' αὖ γυῖα λύνοντας ἐπ' ἀσφοδέλῳ πολυανθεῖ
 λειμῶνος κατέχειν Ἥλυσίοιο νάπας.
 ὦ φίλοι, ἥ γλυκὺν ὕπνον ἔχειν παρὰ θινὶ θαλάσσης
 φέρτερον ἢ κόπης ἡλίθιος κάματος,
 κῦμ' ὅτ' ἐλαυνομένους ἀνέμων θ' ὕβριζον ἅλλαι·
 χαίρετε· τέρμα πλάνης ἐστὶ τόδ' ἡμετέρης.

